

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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HQ 3AF RAF MILDENHALL

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E. O. 11652:XGDS-1

TAGS: UK NATO MPOL MILI

SUBJECT: RAF FAIRFORD

REF: A) STATE 133908; B) LONDON 8725; C) LONDON 8415

1. WELLBELOVED, PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY FOR RAF  
(ACCOMPANIED BY NELSON, DUS/AIR, AND OTHER SENIOR MOD  
OFFICIALS) INVITED DCM, ACCOMPANIED BY POL-MIL ATTACHE,  
COMMANDER 3RD AIR FORCE AND DATT, TO A MEETING ON 5  
JUNE TO DISCUSS MOD DECISION CONCERNING RAF FAIRFORD.

WELLBELOVED CONFIRMED DECISION NOTED REFTEL C, STRESSING  
MOD'S DESIRE TO MOVE FORWARD ON THIS MATTER ASAP. HE  
EXPECTS TO MAKE PUBLIC THE DECISION NLT THE WEEK OF  
12-16 JUNE. MOD OFFICIALS ANTICIPATE A FAIR AMOUNT OF  
FLACK FROM OPPONENTS BUT ARGUE THAT THEY WILL BE ABLE  
TO HANDLE THE OUTCRY FROM LOCAL CONSTITUENTS AND HMG  
WILL RIDE OUT THE STORM. TWELVE MPS ARE DUE TO PROTEST  
TO MULLEY AGAINST A FAIRFORD DECISION--BUT AS FAIRFORD  
IS AN RAF STATION, WHITEHALL WILL HEAR THE PROTEST  
OUT AND THEN PROCEED TO IMPLEMENT THE DECISION. AS  
EXPLAINED TO US, BECAUSE FAIRFORD IS AN RAF STATION  
ALREADY, MOD IS NOT OBLIGED TO SEEK PLANNING AGREEMENT

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FROM THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

2. IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ABOVE, BRITISH STRESS THE  
IMPORTANCE OF STARTING CONVERSION WORK TO MAKE  
FAIRFORD READY FOR THE TANKERS AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE  
AFTER THE ANNOUNCEMENT.

3. WELLBELOVED FLAGGED WHITEHALL CONCERN ABOUT THE EXTENT TO WHICH USAF WISHES TO USE RED HORSE CAPABILITIES (REFTEL A). HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT "CANNOT GO PUBLIC" ON THE FAIRFORD DECISION UNTIL HMG IS ASSURED THAT WE DO NOT PLAN TO EMPLOY RED HORSE EXTENSIVELY. THE BRITISH POINT OUT THAT AGREEMENT VIS-A-VIS USE OF RED HORSE FOR RAPID RUNWAY REPAIR HAS ONLY RECENTLY BEEN NEGOTIATED BETWEEN USAF AND PSA AND OUR PROPOSAL TO USE RED HORSE FOR FAIRFORD "CUTS ACROSS" THE PRINCIPLES ALREADY AGREED TO. IT WAS DECIDED THAT AN EARLY MEETING SHOULD BE HELD TO SORT OUT THE DETAILS.

4. FACER, PRIVATE SECRETARY TO MULLEY, IN A SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSION WITH POL-MIL ATTACHE INFORMED US THAT MULLEY AND WELLBELOVED HAVE GONE OVER STATE OF PLAY VIS-A-VIS FAIRFORD. THEY HAVE CONCLUDED THAT WHILE HMG'S ABILITY TO DELIVER ON FAIRFORD IS NOT IN QUESTION, LOCAL OPPOSITION WILL BE VOCAL AND COULD BE "MESSY." HENCE, MULLEY WANTS ALL THE HELP HE CAN MUSTER--AND THIS MEANS HE NEEDS TO MAKE AS POSITIVE A CASE AS HE CAN FOR THE BENEFITS TO BE DERIVED FROM THE TANKER DEPLOYMENT. FACER OPINED THAT EXTENSIVE USE OF RED HORSE "IS NOT ON." HE SAID WHILE MINISTERS REGRET THAT FAIRFORD IS A MORE COSTLY SOLUTION THAN GREENHAM COMMON, THE ENVIRONMENTAL

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FACTORS OF THE DEPLOYMENT TO FAIRFORD "ARE MUCH THE SAME" AND THE GOVERNMENT WILL WANT TO USE THE ARGUMENT OF "ECONOMIC BENEFITS AS OFFSET. THAT MEANS A RESTRICTED USE OF RED HORSE.

5. COMMENT: WHILE UNDOUBTEDLY THERE IS SOME ROOM FOR NEGOTIATION ON RED HORSE, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THE BRITISH ARE IN A POSITION TO CONCEDE MUCH ON THE PRINCIPLES ALREADY AGREED TO VIS-A-VIS APID RUNWAY REPAIR. OUR MOST EFFECTIVE GAMBIT PROBABLY IS TO ESTABLISH A TIMETABLE FOR A FAST OCCUPANCY OF FAIRFORD--AT A RATE BEYOND PSA'S CAPACITY TO DO THE WORK "IN TIME."

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## Message Attributes

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